

Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.iowa.gov

Oct. 21, 2008

1. Hunt Safely: Another Chapter of Iowa Pheasant Hunting Tradition Begins Saturday
2. Fall Trout Spawn is Underway – by Joe Wilkinson [electronic photos available upon request]
3. New Requirement for Tagging Antlered Deer
4. DNR Wants Your Ideas for Water Trails and Low-head Dam Safety
5. Donors and Local Fundraisers Help Build Iowa's New Resort State Park
6. City Parks, County Conservation Fund New Projects with REAP
7. Conservation Group Adds to Open Spaces with REAP Grants
8. Good Supplies of Native Trees and Shrubs Available, But Order Early

HUNT SAFELY: ANOTHER CHAPTER OF IOWA PHEASANT HUNTING TRADITION BEGINS SATURDAY

The annual gathering of friends and family for the opening of Iowa pheasant hunting season is rich with tradition for more than 100,000 hunters who will be dotting the landscape in their familiar blaze orange hats, vests and jackets at 8 a.m., Oct. 25.

As the anticipation of opening weekend gathers steam, hunters are encouraged to share their traditions with someone new.

“We would like our hunters to expand their group and bring in a new hunter this year,” said Megan Wisecup, recreational safety programs supervisor with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Personally inviting someone new to participate has shown to be a successful method of recruiting new hunters.

Part of the hunting tradition is to hunt safely. Wisecup advised hunters to brush up on their safety tips and to check out their blaze orange before opening morning arrives. Blaze orange can fade over the years and become ineffective and not compliant with the law.

“There will still be a lot of standing corn in the field so hunters should wear a blaze orange hat or cap to help them be seen by others,” she said. “The top pheasant hunting incidents all are related to not being seen. The shooter swings on a rooster, the victim is out of sight of the shooter or the rooster flew between the shooter and the victim. We are encouraging hunters to wear more blaze orange than the minimum required. The purpose of the blaze orange is to be seen.”

The law requires hunters to wear at least one of the following articles of visible, external apparel with at least 50 percent of its surface area solid blaze orange: hat, cap, vest, coat, jacket, sweatshirt, shirt or coveralls.

Wisecup also said that hunters should stay in communication with each other and to stay in a straight line while pushing a field. “We have investigated a number of incidents where hunters have been in a semicircle and had been shooting towards one-another,” she said.

These issues should be discussed as part of the hunting plan that spells out how the hunt will take place, each person’s role in the hunt and where each person will be at all times.

“With so much corn still in the field, visibility will definitely be an issue. I would suggest hunters talk to the landowner to see if anyone else has permission to hunt the ground and if so, when they will be there,” Wisecup said.

Other safety tips include making sure when traveling from spot to spot that hunters unload and case their guns. Hunters are also reminded that if they shoot a bird and it goes down across a fence to land where they do not have permission to hunt, they can legally retrieve the bird, but they must leave their gun behind and take the most direct route in and out of the property. Wisecup suggested hunters unload their gun before they leave it behind to prevent the gun from unintentionally going off.

Hunter Education Classes

There are a few hunter education classes still remaining in October and November but time is running out. There is a listing on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has a listing on its website www.iowadnr.gov Click on Courses on the Safety Education / Courses link in the navigation column on the left side of the page.

“All of the volunteer instructors are hunters too, and they want to get out in the field and share the hunt,” Wisecup said.

Pheasant hunting incidents

2007: 3 total incidents, of which 2 were personal injuries

2006: 4 total incidents, of which 4 were personal injuries

2005: 16 total incidents, of which 16 were personal injuries

2004: 5 total incidents, of which 5 were personal injuries

Media Contact: Megan Wisecup, recreational safety programs supervisor, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-281-8652.

###

[electronic photo upon request]

FALL TROUT SPAWN IS UNDERWAY

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

As autumn colors hit their peak, a fall show of another kind tells fisheries biologists that it is spawning season for Iowa brook trout. At the Manchester hatchery, hundreds of yellow ovals offset the dark olive coloration of each female brook trout ready to spawn. Yet they appear almost drab by comparison to males, with the pronounced body coloring enhanced by cream, black and white-edged fins.

The splashes of color are signs of the season. The hatchery holds brood trout for the yearly spawn. Following the brook trout run, now underway, come the brown trout within a few weeks...then the rainbows in December and January.

There's natural spawning, of course, in some northeast Iowa streams. Most trout caught, though, are spawned under the eyes of hatchery workers at Manchester. Survival rates are hundreds of times higher; meeting the demand of 30,000 or so trout anglers who wade across nine northeast Iowa counties...and a growing number of urban fishing holes that support trout through the winter months.

"These are two-year old females; 14 inches, two to three pounds. Each one yields about 3,000 eggs," explains Dave Marolf, Manchester hatchery manager as he tightens his grip on a slippery brood fish. By comparison, one three year old stretches to 16 inches and weighs four pounds; looking like a torpedo compared to the others.

Firmly stroking the undersides of the female trout, Marolf and Randy Mack direct streams of golden eggs into plastic bowls. Then, a couple male trout are used to add sperm. A saline solution is added, with a turkey feather used to stir the concoction. Within a couple minutes, the eggs are poured into an incubator tray, set under the constant, running water diverted from Spring Branch Creek, outside. In three weeks, the hatchery crew will go through the trays, siphoning off dead, unfertilized eggs. A couple weeks later, the viable eggs hatch as sac-fry.

"We spawn enough to produce about 100,000 brook trout," says Marolf. "Most of them—50,000 to 60,000—will be stocked in 2010, as catchable, half-pound fish. Some will be stocked in 2009 as fingerlings. Most of the rest will be used to feed muskies produced at our Rathbun hatchery."

However, this year's floods leave a gap in 2009 brook trout stocking. Nearly all brook trout spawned *last* fall were washed away. "We had a few end up in the rainbow trout runs, but basically all of the brook trout that would have been catchable in 2009 were washed downstream," says Marolf. Recovered rainbow trout and surplus rainbows from other agencies will fill the stocking schedules. There just won't be any brookies next year.

With the brook trout spawn going strong, crews have corralled over 250 wild *brown* trout from French Creek, in Winneshiek County, for the next round of spawning. Then hatchery-raised rainbows will round out the spawning schedule. As eggs from the three species hatch, the fingerlings will be doled out to Iowa's other two trout stations, near Elkader and Decorah, to be raised for future stocking.

###

NEW REQUIREMENT FOR TAGGING ANTLERED DEER

A tagging requirement that is new for 2008 requires a hunter who kills an antlered buck to place the transportation tag on the animal's antler.

It is recommended that the transportation tag be placed on the antler beam either at the base or between two points. If an individual drops the head of the deer off at a taxidermist the harvest report tag should be attached to the carcass for legal transport.

Hunters who harvest a deer must report their harvest to the DNR by midnight of day after it is killed, or before taking it to a locker, or taxidermist, or before processing it for consumption, or before transporting it out-of-state, whichever occurs first.

This is the third year where hunters have reported their kill and it is an important part of the deer management program in Iowa, playing a vital role in managing deer populations and hunting opportunities. Hunters can report their deer on the DNR website (www.iowadnr.gov), by calling the toll free reporting number (1-800-771-4692), or also at a license vender. For hunters with internet access, the online reporting of the harvest is a quick and easy way to register their deer.

###

DNR WANTS YOUR IDEAS FOR WATER TRAILS AND LOW-HEAD DAM SAFETY

An 18-month planning process is underway for water trails and low-head dam safety in Iowa. A series of listening sessions are scheduled around the state in coming

months. That input will influence Iowa Department of Natural Resources' priorities and plans in coming years.

"Water trails have become a key new way for Iowans to connect with their rivers and lakes," said Nate Hooegeveen, river programs coordinator for the Iowa DNR. "Canoeists and kayakers are using water trails to learn about wildlife they can watch, plan adventures, locate water-access campsites, and learn about the character of streams before they go out."

At the same time, the number of dam-related deaths spiked to six in 2006, some of those on water trails actively being developed.

"It's important that dams are part of the conversation, as most Iowans are not familiar with the dangers of these structures," said Hooegeveen. "Outreach, education, and physically changing the way these dams are constructed needs to be part of the overall plan as we go forward."

Iowa State University's College of Design was awarded a \$110,000 contract by the Iowa DNR in October to lead development of the plan.

"We very much want to hear from Iowans on what experiences they want from their rivers and lakes," said Mimi Wagner, a professor in ISU's Department of Landscape Architecture. "A number of things can affect their experience on these public resources, such as the accesses they use, the information available, and long-term maintenance of water-related facilities. We welcome and need input in developing priorities for limited funding that make sense for Iowans."

ISU and the Iowa DNR kicked off its Statewide Water Trails and Low-head Dam Safety Plan along the Raccoon River in Adel with more than 100 people in attendance on September 29. This planning process will provide the framework for development of water trails going forward, and a how-to manual for volunteers and public lands managers developing water trails.

The upcoming listening sessions are the public's first opportunity to give input, and will serve as the foundation for more in-depth exploration of how draft elements of the plan are developed.

The following five regional sessions are scheduled: Story County - 7 p.m., Nov. 6, McFarland Park, 56461 180th St., Ames; Johnson County - 7 p.m., Nov. 13, Kent Park, Conservation Education Center, 2048 Hwy. 6 NW, Oxford; Pottawattamie County - 7 p.m., Nov. 18, Hancock Nature Center, Hancock; Cherokee County - 7 p.m., Nov. 20, Cherokee County Conservation Center, 629 River Road, Cherokee; Buchanan County - 7 p.m., Dec. 1, Fontana Park Nature Center 1883 125th St., Hazleton.

MEDIA CONTACTS: John Wenck, Iowa DNR River Programs Outreach

**Coordinator, 515-281-8969; Mimi Wagner, ISU Department of Landscape
Architecture Associate Professor, 515-294-8954**

###

DONORS AND LOCAL FUNDRAISERS HELP BUILD IOWA'S NEW RESORT STATE PARK

Several Iowa individuals and companies have made donations to help Honey Creek Resort State Park become a reality. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources recognizes the following organizations for their generous donations:

- Cargill -- \$50,000
- Iowa Trust and Savings Bank, Centerville -- \$50,000
- Peoples State Bank, Albia -- \$30,000
- First Iowa State Bank, Centerville -- \$30,000
- Roger and Jan Winslow -- \$30,000
- Mercy Medical Center, Centerville -- \$30,000
- L and W Quarries/Ideal Ready Mix/Johnson Holding Company -- \$30,000

“Without the investment by these local residents, Honey Creek Resort State Park would still just be a dream,” said DNR Deputy Director Liz Christiansen. “Their dollars will bring dividends to all Iowans, both in economic development and tourism opportunities, as well as creating a showcase venue for Iowans to enjoy the outdoors.”

The organizations and individuals donating thus far worked with Rathbun Lake Resort, Inc. (RLR), a local fundraising group established by residents in southern Iowa to help bring a destination resort to Rathbun Lake.

In 2004, RLR was able to raise \$4 million of in-kind and financial donations to match legislatively appropriated funds for the building of Honey Creek Resort State Park. Of this amount, \$2.06 million came from utility infrastructure development by Rathbun Regional Water Association, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative and Iowa Telecom.

Without the local matching, Honey Creek Resort construction would not have proceeded.

“We have always believed a resort would bring jobs, tourists, residents and improve the quality of life in this region,” said Kevin Kness, president of RLR. “We believe Honey Creek Resort State Park will be counted among Iowa’s greatest assets.”

To recognize contributions, donors have been able to choose name recognition signs throughout the resort, including at meeting and conference rooms, golf holes, cabins and more.

“We see this as just the beginning,” said Kness. “With continued corporate sponsorships and donations, we believe Honey Creek Resort will be one of the best tourism destinations in the Midwest.”

Several other organizations have also made donations, ranging from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Additional donation opportunities are available through RLR for individuals, companies and organizations that want to be part of the Honey Creek success story, according to Kness.

To learn more about donation opportunities at Honey Creek Resort State Park, contact any of the following RLR officers: Kevin Kness at 641-932-7887; Carol Bradley at 641-437-7206; Denny Ryan at 641-799-3861; or Bill Duey at 641-647-2464.

###

CITY PARKS, COUNTY CONSERVATION FUND NEW PROJECTS WITH REAP

About \$4.3 million has been awarded to 28 Iowa communities and six county conservation boards through grants from the state’s Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program.

In its 20th year, REAP reached its second highest year of funding with an \$18 million appropriation in the last legislative session, drawing from state gaming revenues. Sales of natural resource license plates and interest on the account add another \$1 million.

The competitive grant program for cities and county conservation boards received 102 applications asking for \$12.35 million, almost three times the amount available. Grants awarded include

Small cities, population less than 2,000:

Ackley, \$75,000, Prairie Bridges Park development
Preston, \$75,000, Copper Creek trail connection
Gilbert, \$50,000, Gilbert-Ames Greenway Trail
Jewell, \$35,920, Vulgomott Trail link
Cambridge, \$50,000, City recreation area and outdoor learning center
Lake Park, \$75,000, Silver Lake Trail
Woodward, \$75,000, Depot acquisition and restoration
Walcott, \$75,000, Walcott recreation trail and nature park

Medium cities, population 2,000 to 25,000:

Madrid, \$75,000, Trailhead and Gateway Park

Clive, \$125,000, Alice's Road property acquisition
North Liberty, \$100,000, Cornerstone Park Nature Area
Nevada, \$100,000, Indian Creek Greenbelt Trail
Muscatine, \$70,788, Weed Park Zoo Garden and Trail
Altoona, \$125,000, Prairie Heritage Civic Center Plaza
Atlantic, \$75,000, East Ridge Park development
Grinnell, \$100,000, Arbor Lake East Trail shore project
Chariton, \$75,000, Chariton East Lakes project
Story City, \$62,275, Pedestrian/bike trail and Skunk River bridge

Large cities, population over 25,000

Cedar Rapids, \$234,473, Woodland purchase
Davenport, \$51,975, Sunderbrunch Park improvements
Council Bluffs, \$200,000, West Lake restoration in Big Lake Park
Burlington, \$150,000, Flint River Trail
Dubuque, \$200,000, Iowa 32 bike/hike trail
Marshalltown, \$150,000, Riverview Park development
Marion, \$150,000, Krumholtz Woods parkland enhancement
Sioux City, \$124,010, Riverside Park Trail

County Conservation Boards

Dallas, \$95,824, Raccoon River Greenbelt Wagner acquisition
Dallas, \$237,800, Raccoon River Greenbelt Anderson tract acquisition in Kuehn Area
Harrison, \$592,752, Old Town Conservation Area, Romeo unit acquisition
Linn, \$96,000, Upland woodland acquisition to Pinicon Ridge Park
Sioux, \$300,000, Fairview Wildlife Complex acquisition
Clay, \$90,875, Oneota Park additions
Polk, \$67,789, Thorn Valley addition to Chichaqua

For more information contact Ross Harrison, ross.harrison@dnr.iowa.gov, 515-281-5973

###

CONSERVATION GROUP ADDS TO OPEN SPACES WITH REAP GRANTS

More than 200 acres in high quality natural areas will be added to Iowa's public open spaces through the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program's cost-sharing grants with conservation organizations.

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's offer of three areas in three different counties, have been approved with the INHF agreeing to contribute 25 percent to 46

percent of the land purchases, the remainder coming out of the DNR's REAP open spaces account.

With cost sharing from the INHF, the DNR will purchase the following properties:

Woodbury County, 24-acre addition to Stone State Park: \$67,000.

Winneshiek County, 48.3-acre addition to Upper Iowa River Wildlife Management Area: \$182,500

Monona County, 136-acre addition to Loess Hills Wildlife Management Area: \$240,000

For more information contact Ross Harrison, ross.harrison@dnr.iowa.gov, 515-281-5973

###

GOOD SUPPLIES OF NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS AVAILABLE BUT ORDER EARLY

AMES - The Iowa State Forest Nursery currently has a good supply of Iowa grown conservation tree and shrub seedlings available for spring planting.

"There are good supplies of white, red, bur and swamp white oak, black walnut, silver maple and 47 other species of conifers, hardwood trees and shrubs available from the State Forest Nursery," said Roger Jacob State Forest Nursery Manager for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forestry Bureau. Jacob added that even though supplies are currently good seedling production has been decreased so landowners should strongly consider ordering early to ensure they can get the species and quality they need for their planting projects.

These conservation trees and shrubs are bareroot seedlings from locally collected, Iowa seed, and range in size from 8 to 24 inches tall. State Forest Nursery prices remain unchanged from last year, ranging from \$0.25 for an 8 to 16-inch tall conifer such as Norway spruce, to \$0.45 for a 17 to 24-inch tall hardwood tree or shrub such as the oaks. Plants are sold in lots of 100 and a minimum order of 500 plants is required.

For people who do not have the land to plant 500 trees and shrubs but are interested in planting their small acreage for wildlife habitat, the State Nursery offers four special wildlife packets of 200 trees and shrubs for \$90. A Create-a-packet contains 50 each of four species of the purchaser's choice. A Turkey packet designed in cooperation with the Iowa Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation contains 50 each of gray dogwoods, bur, pin, and white oak for mast production. A Pheasant packet contains 50 each of red cedar, wild plum, ninebark and gray dogwood. A Quail packet contains 100

wild plum and 100 gray dogwood. The Songbird packet is perfect for that odd corner in a larger backyard contains 2 bur oak, 2 white pine, 4 each of wild plum, chokecherry, gray dogwood and serviceberry and sells for \$20 which includes shipping.

To order conservation seedlings from the State Forest Nursery call 1-800-865-2477 M-F 8-4:30 p.m., or go to www.iowadnr.gov/forestry/ Credit card orders are accepted.

For more information, contact Jacob at 515/233-1161

###